



CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE COST ESTIMATE

May 25, 2000

H.R. 4201

Noncommercial Broadcasting Freedom of Expression Act of 2000

As ordered reported by the House Committee on Commerce on May 17, 2000

H.R. 4201 would limit the Federal Communications Commission's (FCC's) authority to regulate the content of noncommercial educational broadcast services. For example, the commission could not require such stations to broadcast a minimum number of hours of educational or similar programming. Likewise, it could not set standards for the content of noncommercial broadcasts that differ from the standards applicable to commercial stations. (The bill would affirm, however, that such stations must continue to comply with statutory restrictions regarding advertising, political editorials, and children's television programming.) Finally, H.R. 4201 would require that the biannual audits of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting include reports on its compliance with statutory restrictions on disclosing the identity of contributors and donors.

Based on information from the FCC, CBO estimates that implementing this bill would have no significant effect on the commission's workload or its discretionary spending. For purposes of this estimate, CBO assumes that the legislation would have little, if any, effect on the number of applications for new noncommercial stations. Hence, we estimate that enacting H.R. 4201 would have no significant effect on offsetting receipts from the FCC's auction of spectrum licenses. Because the bill could affect direct spending, pay-as-you-go procedures would apply, but CBO estimates that any such effects would be negligible.

H.R. 4201 contains no intergovernmental or private-sector mandates as defined in the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act and would impose no costs on state, local, or tribal governments.

The CBO staff contact is Kathleen Gramp. This estimate was approved by Peter H. Fontaine, Deputy Assistant Director for Budget Analysis.